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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 001388

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TAGS: [KPKO](#) [PREL](#) [LE](#) [XF](#) [SU](#) [CD](#) [UN](#) [IT](#)
SUBJECT: ITALY AGREES HYBRID AU/UN FORCE IN DARFUR A
PRIORITY; UNIFIL MANDATE UNLIKELY TO CHANGE

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Classified By: Acting Political Minister-Counselor Jonathan R. Cohen for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: During June 21 meetings with Italian officials, IO/PSC Office Director Douglas Wake discussed Sudan, Lebanon, Chad, and peacekeeping operations. On Darfur, Wake stressed the need to move forward quickly with the hybrid force while remaining willing to consider sanctions if Khartoum starts to backtrack. Wake thanked Italy for its leadership in UNIFIL and discussed tactics for mandate renewal. The Italians agreed authorizing the AU/UN hybrid force in Darfur was essential. They were doubtful on the prospect of enhancing UNIFIL's mandate. End Summary.

Italy Agrees Darfur Hybrid Force Urgent

12. (C) In discussion on Sudan with MFA Director General for Sub-Saharan Affairs Armando Sanguini, Wake said he was cautiously optimistic after Khartoum's apparent acceptance of the hybrid AU/UN peacekeeping force and hoped this represented a real opportunity. He added, however, that we must remain cautious until we see changes in Sudanese actions and suggested Khartoum's acceptance could be more shrewd politics by President Bashir, buying breathing room for the time being, but allowing him to erect future roadblocks to standing up the peacekeeping force. Wake said our priorities for establishing the hybrid force include clarifying: UN command and control; financing; and the force's exact mandate under UN Chapter VII authority.

13. (C) Sanguini emphasized the political origins of the crisis in Darfur and warned that any attempt to resolve it must address the fundamental roots of the conflict, including the distribution of essential resources. He noted that a meaningful resolution cannot be based exclusively on pressuring Bashir and the GOS, and must include major rebel groups. He agreed that action is needed immediately to move the hybrid force through the UNSC, but said in the meantime the AU remains on the ground and requires support.

14. (C) MFA UN Coordinator Giamberto De Vito said Italy is concerned about the precedent set by the proposed hybrid AU/UN force in Sudan, and that as a major financier of UN peacekeeping missions, Italy could be assessed for missions

undertaken by regional organizations such as the AU. After Italy leaves the UNSC at the end of 2008, it would have no voice in such decisions.

¶15. (C) Wake said the USG shares concerns about the cost of financing non-UN missions through UN peacekeeping assessments, and that the hybrid force would need to look as much like a UN operation as possible, including its accounting procedures. He also suggested that savings could be made by reducing the size of some long-standing peacekeeping missions, such as those in Cote d'Ivoire and the DRC.

GOI Sees UNIFIL Mandate Unlikely to Change

¶16. (C) Wake discussed Lebanon with MFA Middle East Office Director Luciano Pezzotti, Prime Minister's Diplomatic Advisor for the Middle East Marco Carnelos, and De Vito. He thanked each for Italy's significant contribution to UNIFIL. While discussing the upcoming debate on UNIFIL's mandate, Wake pointed out that parts of UNSCR 1701's mandate remain unfulfilled because the Lebanese government has not requested UNIFIL action as required under the resolution. While noting that Washington had not finalized its position on the UNIFIL mandate renewal resolution to be adopted by the end of August 2007, and that the U.S. was keen to hear the views of major troop contributors like Italy, he raised the possibility of broadening the mandate to allow UNIFIL to act more freely. Even if the eventual mandate was unlikely to be made stronger, Wake asked whether for tactical negotiating purposes it might be useful to push for mandate changes to stave off attacks from those who would try to weaken it.

¶17. (C) De Vito, Pezzotti, and Carnelos all considered a strengthening of the mandate unlikely. Looking toward the

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renewal of UNSCR 1701, De Vito suggested that because of Italy's presence as a troop contributor, it would be difficult for Italy to suggest a mandate change. He said such a suggestion would be best coming from an independent party, preferably the UNSYG.

¶18. (C) Pezzotti pointed out that UNSCR 1701, although imperfect, balanced complicated international and domestic Lebanese interests and would be difficult to broaden while maintaining this delicate equilibrium. He also said pressure by Israel for UNIFIL to be more aggressive was unhelpful, particularly as this amounts to asking UNIFIL to do what Israel was unable to do itself last summer. He said for the time being UNIFIL is able to keep Israel safe, but asking UNIFIL to dismantle Hizballah was unrealistic. Pezzotti said UNIFIL's top priorities must be reinforcing the Lebanese government and army and facilitating political compromise within Lebanese society. Pezzotti agreed on the need to stop weapons transfers on the Syrian border, but said the only way to do so would be through a political agreement within Lebanon and with Lebanon's neighbors.

¶19. (C) Carnelos thought that suggesting a change in UNIFIL's mandate could create dangerous domestic trouble for PM Siniora. Proposing stronger mandate language only to have it eventually weakened could also be interpreted as a defeat, he warned. From his recent visits to Beirut, Carnelos said he has concluded that Israeli damage to Hizballah was significantly less than originally hoped. While weapons smuggling across the Syrian border is unacceptable and a violation of UNSCR 1701, he did not believe that it altered the fundamental security situation.

Cautious on French Peacekeeping Initiative in Chad

¶10. (C) De Vito raised a French initiative to send a peacekeeping force of 9,000 to 11,000 peacekeepers to Chad, and said that Italy remains cautious and prefers to continue analyzing the political situation to see if such a force is truly necessary. He asked how a mandate for such a mission would be defined. Would peacekeepers protect only Chadian IDPs or also Darfurian refugees? Would they operate only inside the camps or more broadly? De Vito said the French are circulating a proposal that calls for an EU role in Chad through ESDP that Italy is still examining.

¶11. (C) Wake replied that the facts on the ground have been clear for some time, and that the USG favors speedy action to establish a robust mission in Chad. Wake said it would be impractical for peacekeepers to be asked to distinguish between different IDPs and refugees.

¶12. (U) IO/PSC Office Director Douglas Wake cleared this cable.
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